



VOLUNTEERS IN PARKS PROGRAM 2008 Annual Program Activity Report

Summary

Calendar year 2008 represented a new benchmark for volunteer service in California State Parks – a record number of **20,676** individuals provided an all-time high of **1,061,570 hours** of service, with an equivalent dollar value to the department of over **\$21 million**.^{*} The attached charts summarize 2008 volunteer activity and overall trends over the past decade.

Surpassing the previous high reached in 2006, the number of state parks volunteers increased by 17% in 2008 and exceeded the threshold of one million volunteer hours recorded in 1997. The average number per volunteer of 51 hours served annually remained comparable to previous years' averages.

Interpretation continued to represent the largest category of volunteer service, comprising more than 27% of all volunteer hours. Similarly, campground and park hosts and volunteers performing other public contact functions combined for almost 30% of total volunteer hours.

Staff Support and Training

The dedicated staff who administered the Volunteers in Parks Program in 2008 deserve special acknowledgment. The number of field employees managing volunteers increased by 14%, from 713 to 833, as the number of staff hours devoted to volunteer administration increased to an all-time high of 118,492 hours. Each staff hour expended yielded nearly nine hours of volunteer service. Mott Training Center conducted training in camp host administration attended by fifteen park employees in the Two Rivers Training Facility in September 2008.

Special Events

Earth Day, Trails Day, Coastal Cleanup Day and other one-day and weekend special events attracted over 11,000 short-term volunteers. Working collaboratively with the California State Parks Foundation, park cooperating associations and other co-sponsors, California State Parks continued to engage individuals throughout the state in maintaining trails, cleaning up our parks and beaches, and producing living history demonstrations, among a variety of activities.

Volunteer Recognition

Department staff presented 58 Poppy Awards and 21 Volunteer Medallions – a record number - to outstanding volunteers during 2008.

Volunteer Enhancement Program

Proposition 84, approved by California voters in 2006, allocated \$4 million to the Volunteer Enhancement Program, allowing the department in FY 08/09 to fund five projects totaling \$650,000. Districts used VEP funds to upgrade interpretive facilities, develop or improve camp host sites, and support other projects that helped enhance our parks and increase volunteer participation.

Program Contact

If you have questions about this report, please contact Margo Cowan at (916) 653-8819 or by e-mail at mcowan@parks.ca.gov.

^{*} The 2008 volunteer service hour is based on the private sector value of \$20.25 per hour, derived from private non-farm payroll determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor, as reported by the Independent Sector in Washington, D.C.